

Testimony Summary: Training Behavioral Professionals for Michigan in Michigan
James T. Todd, Professor of Psychology, Eastern Michigan University

- Eastern Michigan University's Clinical Behavioral Psychology Program (sometimes called the "CB Program") has been training applied behavior analysts for over 25 years.
- The CB program has a world-wide reputation for excellence.
- The CB program (and its counterpart at WMU) are the main venues for behavioral training in the state, including the production of BCBAs for autism.
- EMU also has a Psychology Ph.D. program which has been training doctoral-level clinical psychologists for 10 years.
- The focus of the Ph.D. program is not behavior analysis, but some students choose to concentrate on it by advisor selection. These behavioral Ph.D. students will add to the number of autism experts in the state, and serve an important role as supervisors, professors, and treatment professionals.
- The various programs prepare students for the Limited License in Psychology, Psychology Licensure, and the Board Certified Behavior Analyst credential.
- The course requirements in all programs exceed the standards for all credentials.
- Approximately 12-15 students enter the CB program per year and 8 - 10 graduate.
- Approximately 8 students enter the Ph.D. program per year and about 6 graduate. Employment of CB program graduates is virtually 100%, but most do not enter the autism field. Or, they leave for work in autism in other states.
- Head injury rehab and similar fields absorb most of the CB graduates who stay.
- Most of the students who come into the program hoping for work in autism find themselves doing other things when they leave.
- Michigan has approximately 100 BCBAs, about one-third of whom work in developmental disabilities. This is the inverse of most other states.
- The number of students entering our program who are interested in autism is increasing, including international students from as far away as India and Iceland. But, most students are Michiganders who wish to stay.
- The CB program could accommodate more students, including attracting more from out-of-state--if autism funding opened up practicum and internship sites. Classroom opportunities are easier to expand than practicum and internship sites, which tend to be the more critical limiting factor in psychology training programs.
- We would hope to establish training sites in areas of Michigan currently underserved.
- We intend to maintain our program requirements above the minimum required for the various licenses and certifications. Our program's reputation is strong because our training is strong. In addition to full employment of graduates, we have 100% placement of Ph.D. students in internship sites, many going to the top sites in the country. We anticipate expanded autism opportunities will bring more of them back.
- We intend to play an important role in increasing the number of highly trained autism treatment professionals in Michigan, and to help make Michigan a model for exemplary training and service provision for autism.